LUNARDI'S

GRAND AEROSTATIC VOYAGE

THROUGH

THE AIR,

CONTAINING

A complete and circumſtantial Account of the Grand Aerial Flight made by that enterpriſing Foreigner, in his Air Balloon, on September 15, 1784, from the Time of his being launched in it, in the Artillery-Ground, to his deſcending with it, on the ſame Day, near Ware, in Hertfordſhire; together with a Variety of Particulars, during his Abode in that truly wonderful and magnificent Machine, that have never yet tranſpired.

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MDCCLXXXIV.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TO HIS

ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE

PRINCE OF WALES,

THE

FOLLOWING PUBLICATION

IS MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

MOST DEVOTED

HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

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THE day being arrived on which Mr. LUNARDI had informed the public, by repeated advertiſements, that he would aſcend with the Air Balloon, he had for ſome time paſt exhibited at the Lyceum; at a very early hour of the day, about *one hundred and fifty thouſand ſpectators*, on a moderate calculation, compoſed of all ranks and deſcriptions of people, aſſembled together at the Artillery Ground, Moorfields, where the machine was to be launched, and the adjacent poſts; forming together of themſelves, perhaps, one of the grandeſt ſpectacles ever ſeen, there being amongſt the higher circles of people, the Prince of Wales, Mr. Fox, Colonel Fitzpatrick, Lord North, Lord Robert Spencer, Colonel North, Mr. Burke, Lord Surry,

Mr.

Mr. Sheridan, and many other perſons of diſtinction, and as great a diſplay of female beauties as ever, at any one time, feaſted the eye of admiration.

The novelty of a man aſcending to the clouds by the aſſiſtance of a quantity of inflammable air, contained in a balloon of 33 feet diameter, was a curioſity which this country had never beheld, and of courſe both the credulous and the infidel attended. Some confidently aſſured that Lunardi would perform his promiſe, and others equally certain that his propoſed aerial flight was impracticable. Bedlam and Saint Luke's were covered with ſpectators; and houſes, rooms, and places, to accomodate the public, were let from the price of fifty guineas to one ſhilling. Amongſt thoſe who viewed the exhibition from apartments hired for the purpoſe, were Mr. *Pitt* and the Duke of Richmond, with a ſelect party of their friends.

About one o'clock Mr. Lunardi, and a Mr. Biggins, who intended to aſcend with Mr. Lunardi in the balloon, came upon the ſpot.

Upon the appearance of Mr. Lunardi, the moſt profound ſilence prevailed among the company in the Artillery Ground,

Ground, as well as thoſe occupying places in the ſurrounding houſes, and innumerable temporary erections: but without the walls there was a ſtrange confuſion of tongues; and it was ſingular to behold, perhaps, not leſs than an hundred and fifty thouſand people preſſing upon each other, and crouding for a view, each individual ſtriving to obtain an altitude above that of his neighbour.

The operation of filling the balloon was carried on under the inſpection of Dr. George Fordyce, during the whole of the preceding night. The materials of the rarefied air were zink, oil of vitriol, and ſteel ſhavings. About noon the machine was ſufficiently charged—In removing the croſs pole by which it was ſuſpended, one of the uprights gave way, and the perſon who was aloft, a ſailor, was in danger of falling; but, with great dexterity, he ſeized on a rope, and ſlid with coolneſs and unconcern to the ground—the uprights were then cleared away from the balloon without injury. They then proceeded to fix the car to the machine, and to aſcertain by weights the power of the air. This was done with ſcrupulous and ſcientific care—the globe was lowered from the ſcaffold on which it was filled, and Mr. Biggins, as well as Mr. Lunardi, took their ſeats in the gallery, which

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was formed of an upright four-feet ſquare, and netted with a ſtrong cord, about breaſt high, but quite open at the top.

Another experiment was then made of the power of the globe, when the voyagers were thus ſeated; but it was found, to the regret of all, that the enterprizing ſpirit of Mr. Biggin muſt remain, for a time at leaſt, ungratified. The globe had not capacity and ſtrength to elevate them both, and Mr. Biggins, with evident concern, yielded up his ſeat. No men could be more collected and cool than they both were in the moment when the firſt ſignal was given for their departure—nor could any thing be more viſible than the regret which they felt on ſeparating.

Upon firing the firſt gun all was ſilent and anxious expectation; but in a few minutes the impatience of the people threatened to overleap the bounds of diſcretion. A rumour, fleet as the wind that was to be the medium of conveyance to the adventurous aeroſtatiſt, diſperſed through the croud, that the balloon had burſt; in every quarter murmurs increaſed to a height indicating a diſpoſition to riot, but every thing of the kind, however, quickly ſubſided upon the ſecond ſignal, which was given by Mr. Lunardi about two o'clock. The ſupporters then withdrew, and the machine

chine mounted with ſlow and gradual majeſty into the air. When it had riſen about the height of an hundred feet, it deſcended again very low, and it was ſo near the houſes, that the moſt rational fears were entertained of its ſtriking againſt them; but Mr. Lunardi, with great preſence of mind, threw out with his feet a large quantity of his ballaſt from his ſand bags, when the immenſe machine overcame the preſſure of the atmoſphere, diſappointed the gloomy wiſdom of the ſplenetic, and roſe with the moſt beautiful and even progreſs to the ſkies. The clearneſs of the day, and the grandeur of the machine, added to the novelty, made it a luxury to the moſt untutored mind; but to the philoſopher and the man of letters it was an occaſion of the moſt rational delight—thus to ſee a new element ſubdued by the talents of man.

Mr. Lunardi was accompanied in his aerial paſſage by a couple of pigeons, a cat, and a favourite lap dog. Nothing could equal the ſurprize and amuſement, the pleaſure and concern, the fear and expectation that appeared through the aſtoniſhed multitude. The loudeſt acclamations rent the ſkies, ſome cried through exceſs of joy, ſome wept for his ſafety, others claſped their hands together in the moſt fer-

vent prayer, and every one vied with each other in wiſhing him ſucceſs.

When the grand machine appeared ſuperbly floating in the newly ſubdued element, and the cradle containing the bold Aerial Navigator was ſeen depending from it, aſtoniſhment ſeized the multitude, and *awful ſilence ſtilled the air*, which the next inſtant was in tremulation with the moſt impaſſioned burſts of applauſe, from the greateſt aſſemblage of people that a public ſpectacle had ever occaſioned in this country.

The Prince of Wales drank to him, previous to his departure, in a glaſs of wine, and affectionately took him by the hand as he was about to aſcend. Mr. Lunardi appeared perfectly compoſed, and as the balloon went up, bowed moſt gracefully, and calmly waved his flag to the admiring and wonder-ſtruck ſpectators.

The globe took firſt a direction north weſt and by weſt. It continued this courſe for a conſiderable time, and roſe to an immenſe height, when it evidently came into a new current of air; for while the flag on the Armory Houſe blew the ſame way, the globe took a direction due north, and perſe-

perſevered in that track within ſight of the naked eye almoſt an hour.

On his firſt aſcenſion Mr. Lunardi flouriſhed one of his flags, and being evidently too much encumbered, he threw it out. Soon after one his oars broke from the pivot, and he threw that down alſo; but ſo long as he continued within obſervation, he made uſe of the other occaſionally to direct his courſe, and it had ſome influence by way of helm. He took in plenty of proviſions with him, and alſo materials for ſupplying the machine with a recruit of air, as he certainly propoſed to take as long a flight as poſſible. He likewiſe took with him a quadrant, thermometer, barometer, and an optical inſtrument, for the purpoſe of making obſervations.

For a moment the globe hung ſuſpended, as if inclined to fall, but Mr. Lunardi inſtantly kicking out a conſiderable portion of his reduced ballaſt, aſcended triumphantly, ſtanding erect in the gallery, and waving his flag as a return to the inceſſant acclamations that were paid him at his departure. When he was a little higher than St. Paul's he dropped his flag, and ſoon after fired a piſtol; in about a quarter of an hour, ſailing over Pall Mall at an immenſe height, he met

with

with a counter current of air, which carried him rapidly a north eaſterly courſe, over Highgate, though the wind below continued blowing freſh a direct contrary direction.—The globe was viſible from various parts of the town till near five o'clock, appearing then not larger than a tennis ball, ſoon after which it became inviſible, leaving an inpreſſion of anxiety on the minds of all, for the ſafety of the philoſophic adventurer.

When Mr. Lunardi had gained the utmoſt altitude of his aſcenſion, he felt ſo ſtrong a propenſity for ſleeping, that it was with the utmoſt difficulty he could keep himſelf awake; the cold too at this time became ſo intenſely piercing, as to render Mr. Lunardi's ſituation in it almoſt inſupportable, and his continuing in it not altogether prudent. The degree of cold followed as Mr. Lunardi aſcended, in much the ſame manner as perſons find themſelves affected, as they approach the top of the well-known Peak of Teneriffe. The cat was ſo benumbed as to be rendered motionleſs; and had not Mr. Lunardi's regard for his dog led him to afford him the warmth of his boſom, the animal would inevitably have periſhed.

The proſpects which the amazing height of the balloon afforded Mr. Lunardi were grand and awful beyond the power

power of imagination. The whole world appeared, as it were, in one view to his immediate proſpect. When Mr. Lunardi had got about half a mile from the earth, and was perfectly ſatisfied of the ſecurity of the vaſt and ſtupenduous machine in which he had ſoared, he ventured to look over the gallery for the purpoſe of exploring the regions beneath him, but was prevented for a while by a ſudden giddineſs that ſeized him. Mr. Lunardi, however, ſoon got the better of this, and could look around him without being in the leaſt affected. But what moſt excited his admiration, was the innumerable clouds that rolled on in ſucceſſion before him, the variegated colour of which exhibited a ſpectacle not more novel to him, than it was grand and beautiful.

In order to remove all manner of doubt as to the entire management Mr. Lunardi had of the balloon, he ſeveral times kept it in one poſition, ſuffering it neither to aſcend nor deſcend in the ſmalleſt degree. At one period of his journey, in particular, he kept it, as it were, at a fixed point, for more than ten minutes. After this, he ſteered it in an horizontal line, ſometimes ſlackening, and ſometimes quickening its velocity, juſt as his fancy or convenience might ſuggeſt.

The oar which dropped fell near the New Seſſions Houſe, Clerkenwell Green, and was dextrouſly caught by Mr. Seaſon, maſter of the Magpye alehouſe, the corner of Mutton Lane: one of the wings or ſails fell in Ray Street, and was taken up by Mrs. Godfrey, a ſervant at the Baptiſt's Head, St John's Lane; but it was ſeized and torn to pieces and divided among the populace. The poor woman, with ſtreaming eyes and wringing hands, declared, that the loſs of her husband or one of her children would ſcarcely have given her more affliction than ſhe felt at being ſo cruelly deſpoiled of the ſignal of good luck that the *flying conjurer* had thrown into her lap.

After Mr Lunardi had been up in his balloon about an hour and a half, the thermometer ſtood at 35 degrees, when the atmoſphere was ſo cold, that icicles were upon his clothes, and he was fearful his balloon would burſt—at this time he drank ſeveral glaſſes of wine; but his proviſions were ſo intermixed with the ſand at the bottom of the gallery, as to be of no ſervice: on throwing out ſome air, the thermometer roſe to 50, when the atmoſphere was delightful; and in this ſituation he floated for an hour. In paſſing over ſome villages, he called with his ſpeaking trumpet to the people, who heard him and anſwered. At Northaw he deſcended ſo low as to converſe

converſe with a villager, a ſervant of Mr Strong's, who was digging gravel. He there threw out his cat, which had accompanied him, and which was taken up alive by an inhabitant.

He experienced, in the different regions of air through which he paſſed, a variety of climates; ſometimes the cold was ſo intenſe, as to freeze the water he took with him;—he did not feel any inconvenience from heat, after his firſt aſcent, at which time he was very warm.

He deſcended a little paſt five o'clock on Wedneſday evening, at a place called Colliers-end, about four miles from Ware. His excurſion was of the length of about three hours and a quarter, being the period which he propoſed continuing afloat, although he had gaz enough to have kept his balloon ſuſpended for three days. It is computed, that his courſe was at the rate of twenty miles an hour, and that at times he was at an elevation of full three miles from the earth.

He appeared, on his return, much fatigued, but declared, that it was more owing to his exertions in preparing his machine before it went up, than to his exerciſe, in regulating it afterwards. He had ſuch entire power over his machine,

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as to be enabled to chooſe a favourable ſpot for his deſcent: it was a field in which he obſerved a country girl, to whom he called for aſſiſtance, that the balloon might be prevented from dragging on the ground. At firſt ſhe ſeemed to be much frightened; but on Mr Lunardi's aſſuring her there was no danger, and explaining, as well as he could, his ſituation, and the nature of his journey, ſhe readily gave her aſſiſtance. On the balloon firſt reaching the ground, it rolled about ſome time, and drew the gallery after it, which drove Mr. Lunardi againſt a tree, but he fortunately received no damage. A conſiderable quantity of ice was found upon the gallery.

When he was firſt obſerved, a number of country people inſtantly haſtened round him; together with many of the gentlemen of the country, among whom was William Baker, Eſq. late Member for Hartford, who had viewed his aſcending in the balloon, at the Artillery Ground, and in whoſe company he proceeded to Ware, where he dined; after which he ſet off for that gentleman's ſeat near Hartingfordbury, where he paſſed the night. Two of Mr. *Lunardi's* intimate friends followed him from town in a poſt chaiſe as far as Hodſdon, over which town he paſſed at about half an hour paſt three.

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Though Mr. Lunardi went only 26 miles, he computes that he made a much longer traverſe, and would have been at leaſt 70 or 80 miles diſtance, had he gone a ſtrait line.

Mr. Biggin's diſappointment was the moſt mortifying. It aroſe from the following circumſtance: Dr. Fordyce, who attended the filling of the balloon till 12 o'clock the night preceding the experiment, retired home for a few hours reſt, after having given the workmen the moſt clear directions to purſue the ſame proceſs till his return, which was about four o'clock, when, to his great ſurpriſe, he found the workmen had got drunk, and entirely neglected the buſineſs.

To this neglect alone was it owing, that Mr. Biggin could not aſcend with Mr. Lunardi, the globe requiring full four hours more filling with inflammable air, to enable it to carry up the largeſt gallery, with the two adventurers!

Mr. Lunardi was quite benumbed with the cold he had ſuffered in the upper regions; the thermometer was ſix degrees below the freezing point! and the dog was very wet.

It was Mr. Lunardi's firſt intention to have extended his flight a few miles only from the metropolis, and having aſcended to a particular height, he propoſed working his way back again to the Artillery-ground by the aſſiſtance of his wings; this ſcheme, however, was fruſtated by the loſs of one wing; but from the power he preſerved over the balloon under this diſadvantage, he has no doubt he would have ſucceeded with both.

Mr. Lunardi arrived in town on Friday afternoon, and waited on the Prince of Wales, at Carlton Houſe, with whom he was in converſation upwards of two hours; but the balloon and apparatus were ſent the day before, and ſafely depoſited with Dr. Fordyce, of Eſſex-Street, in the Strand.

The evening previous to his aſcending in the balloon, *Mr. Lunardi*, impelled thereto by that common prudence every man ought to be actuated by, and not through the impulſe of fear, called upon Mr. Townly Ward, of Henrietta Street, and ſigned his will, which had been previouſly prepared, with a degree of compoſure that ſtrongly marked the philoſopher and the chriſtian.

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Without attempting to enquire, whether aeroſtatic experiments have a further tendency than to amuſe the mind and gratify curioſity, the occurrence here related may probably have an effect highly ſalutary both with reſpect to religion and morality. It had an extraordinary influence upon the vulgar and uninformed, who had been almoſt unanimous in declaring the project impracticable. Demonſtration having convinced them of their error, they will in future be careful not obſtinately to perſevere in opinions haſtily and inconſiderately adopted. Having beheld the ingenuity of man accompliſh an exploit that they had not conceived to be within the ſcope of poſſibility, by a natural tranſition, the *firmament fretted with golden fires* will become an object of their enquiry; and as often as Mr. Lunardi's atchievement recurs to their recollection, ideas connected with the Heavenly ſyſtem will ariſe in their minds; and what was at firſt conſidered but as matter of curioſity, it may be preſumed, will be a powerful means of leading the mind of man to contemplate the ſtupendous works of the creation, and conſequently to revere and venerate the great and omnipotent Author of our being.

F I N I S.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM